Establishment of Rural Business Hubs

1668. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any initiative from his Ministry to have an action plan to establish rural business hubs in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that Andhra Pradesh has not been included in the States identified for developing rural business hubs;

(c) if so, the reasons behind neglecting Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) what are the core areas identified by his Ministry for rural business?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) A Conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers in charge of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj on Poverty Alleviation through Panchayati Raj was organised in Delhi on 29-30 June, 2004. The Prime Minister in his inaugural address emphasized the need to learn from the Chinese Model of Town and Village Enterprises that add value to agricultural produce in the rural areas. In this context, he suggested the establishment of Rural Business Hubs based on local resource endowments, felt needs of the local community, and relative absorptive capacity. Accordingly, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been engaged in consultation with various experts in order to devise an appropriate framework for Panchayats to facilitate the setting up of the Rural Business Hubs. In November, 2004, National Presentation on Rural Business Hubs was organised jointly by Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Confederation of Indian Industry in which several Government agencies such as IT, Financial Institutions including NABARD and institutions dealing with Textiles, Handicrafts and Agro Business participated. About 1000 elected representatives of Gram Panchayats, Block Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats from various States/UTs also participated along with about 250 representatives of industry. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the CII are now working together to facilitate public-private-panchayat partnership to establish rural business hubs. For this purpose, a Rural Business Hubs (RBH) Council Co-chaired by the Minister of Panchayati Raj and Shri S.K. Munjal, former Chairman of CII has been set up. The first Meeting of the Council was held on the 29th July, 2005.

(b) and (c) The RBH Council initially identified ten States namely, Uttaranchal, Kerala, Karnataka, J&K, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal,

U.P., Chhattisgarh and Assam to establish RBH pilot project. The remaining States would also be taken up for the development of Rural Business Hubs based on the progress of the pilots. Proposals from Andhra Pradesh would be welcome. The Ministry is in touch with the Government of Andhra Pradesh in this regard.

(d) The core areas identified for development of Rural Business Hubs are in the field of renewable energy including bio-gas, bio-fuel from Jatropha plantation and solar energy, Agro industries, Agro Processing and Rural Industries including Khadi & Village Industries and Textiles, handlooms and handicrafts.

Installation of Computers in Panchayats

1669. SHRI R. KAMARAJ:
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:
SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to spend over Rs. 1,000 crores in the next two years towards installation of computers in 2.4 lakh panchayats, interlink them with one another and also with a national panchayati portal;

(b) if so, the guidelines worked out so far for this project;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government are banking on the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance to raise funds in this regard;

(d) whether talks were held with them in this regard; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is preparing a scheme for the computerization of Panchayats, under the National e-Governance plan, which will require close coordination with the Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance and State Governments in implementation. Expenditure targets are being finalized.